

ISC Baseline Project

Branch Level Introductory Interview Guide

This questionnaire is to be used to structure interviews with branch heads and associate branch heads in the ISC. The main objectives of these interviews are to characterize each branch in terms of high-level attributes and to identify all of the teams in each branch. The interviewer should feel free to modify the wording or order of the questions if it seems appropriate during the course of the interview. Also, questions should be skipped if they have already been addressed in enough detail earlier in the interview. The scribe's notes should follow this outline to facilitate data extraction.

Who: ISC Branch Heads and Associate Branch Heads

Subjects covered: Measurement Goal 1 of ISC Baseline Effort

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Interviewee:

ISC Branch:

Interviewer:

Scribe:

Date of interview:

Duration:

Location:

Introductory spiel (general outline):

We're from the Software Engineering Laboratory, which is a group in Code 581 that studies software development projects in order to improve development practices in the local organization. The SEL also includes members from CSC and the University of Maryland [interviewer should indicate where they're from]. Up until recently, we've been working strictly with the Flight Dynamics Division (what used to be Code 550), but now our focus has shifted to the entire ISC. So one of our current projects is to better understand the software-related activities in the ISC by performing a baselining study.

More specifically, we would like to get a snapshot of the entire ISC organization at this point in time in terms of what kinds of work are being done, how the different branches are organized, what methods and techniques are being used, etc. This will give us a point of comparison against which to track future changes and improvements. It will also help the ISC management to understand the makeup of the Center and hopefully to identify areas where help is needed.

The purpose of this first interview is to get an overview of how your branch works. I'll be asking you some general questions about the type of work you do and how it's organized. Then I'll be giving you our questionnaire which asks for more detailed information, that you can fill out at your convenience over the next two weeks. This longer questionnaire is partially based on questionnaires used in past baselining efforts for Goddard and NASA as a whole. Then I'll be calling you to set up a time when we can sit down for a second interview where we'll be going over the questionnaire. Any questions before we start?

Question-1 We've read your branch's functional description (dated June, 1997) on the Project Goddard Web page and it says [*summarize in a sentence*]. Is that still accurate?

Question-2 How is the work organized within the branch? In teams?

Question-3 Would you list for me all the teams in your branch?

Question-4 Is there any work going on in the branch that does not fall under a defined team [*or other unit, depending on answer to question 2*]? Are there defined leadership roles in teams (e.g. team leader, project leader, liaison, etc.)?

Question-5 How are the people in your branch funded (e.g. 100% full cost accounting)?

Question-6 How does outsourcing work in this branch? When is it used? For what types of work?

Question-7 What types of products does this branch produce?

Question-8 Who are customers and/or users of your products, in general?

Question-9 How do you see any of these characteristics of your branch changing in the short- or long-term future?

Question-10 What process improvement activities is your branch currently involved in?